

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 10, 2017

Agenda Item: Edgar Bridge Donation on Clarks Fork River (R5)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background

Carbon County has offered a donation of approximately 1.5 acres of property located along the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone at Edgar for development as a fishing access site (FAS). This property is bordered by a county road and an old county bridge access road, which provides good access to this parcel while isolating it from neighboring properties. This site would provide public access to a long section of the Clarks Fork River that currently has no public access. The closest FASs to this site are located 26 miles upstream on the Clarks Fork River and 26 miles downstream on the Yellowstone River -- 4 miles below the confluence of the Clarks Fork and Yellowstone rivers. Development at this site would include safe parking off the county road, a gravel boat ramp and possibly a picnic area.

Public Involvement Process & Results

There has been no formal public involvement to date on acquiring this parcel. Community residents contacted by the local county Commissioner were in favor of the acquisition by the Department. Upon gaining the Commission's endorsement to proceed with this acquisition, the Department would conduct an environmental review and solicit public comments.

Alternatives and Analysis

The Commission's endorsement would enable the Department to pursue the acquisition of this parcel as a donation from Carbon County. This site would provide much needed river access for anglers, recreational floaters and waterfowl hunters, as well as for members of local communities on a long section of river that currently has no public access. Improvement of fish passage on the Clarks Fork River has been identified as a key project for fisheries mitigation dollars from the Yellowstone River oil spill. Improved fish passage that provides better access for Yellowstone River fish to the Clarks Fork should improve this fishery resulting in increased access demands on the river. Endorsing the acceptance of this donation from Carbon County could be very important in addressing future recreation demands on the Clarks Fork River.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends the Commission endorse the Department's request to pursue acquiring this parcel through a donation from Carbon County. The public would gain access in the middle of a long section of the Clarks Fork River that currently has no public access.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission endorse FWP's request to pursue Carbon County's offer to donate a parcel of land along the Clarks Fork River near Edgar for a new fishing access site.